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ABSTRACT

This paper provides summaries of 31 speeches presented at the conference. The theme of this conference was what is new, what is working, and what is happening within the North Central Region and across the country to aid the success of at-risk students. Speeches described specific programs that have been effective. Others covered relevant legislation and school policy. (JS)

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FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Success for At-Risk Students:

A Continuing Priority

August 17-19, 1988
The Palmer House Hotel
Chicago, Illinois

Presented by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

Prepared by

Patricia Stephens
and
Marianne Kroeger

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Introduction

Nearly 400 people from 22 states participated in NCREL's second regional conference, "Success for At-Risk Students: A Continuing Priority," August 17-19, 1988, at Chicago's Palmer House Hotel.

NCREL and its regional partners have identified success for at-risk students as a topic that will continue to be the focus of significant activities over a period of years. In its first regional conference in February of 1987, NCREL set out to increase awareness of a growing problem -- a problem involving perhaps one-third of today's elementary and secondary school students who are at risk of not completing or not benefitting from their time in our schools.

The overriding theme of that first conference was that despite the discouraging picture painted by the demographic and economic statistics, the national community must not be overwhelmed. Repeated throughout that conference was the message that it will take non-traditional systems to succeed where traditional methods have failed with at-risk students.

In August of 1988, NCREL brought together teachers, administrators, education agency representatives, parents, and policymakers to find out what was new, what was working, and what was happening within the North Central Region and across the country.

Three keynote addresses, four general sessions, and 31 break-out sessions were offered over the two-day conference. Audio tapes of selected sessions were available for purchase by seminar participants, and key presentations have been selected for summarization in this document; by no means is this intended as a verbatim transcript. Summaries were prepared by NCREL staff from audio tapes and personal notes.

NCREL wishes to thank the region's Chief State School Officers, State Education Agency Liaisons, members of the Board of Directors, members of the Urban Education Network, rural partners, state facilitators of the National Diffusion Network, constituents, presenters, and all individuals who gave their time, energy, and expertise to ensure the success of this conference.

Summaries

Opening Banquet, Wednesday, August 17

Keynote Speaker: **Victor Herbert, Executive Director, Division of High Schools, 110 Livingston St., Rm. 826, Brooklyn, NY 11201**
"At-Risk Youth: Some Successful Strategies"

Victor Herbert believes an ambivalence exists in this country about who we are and where we're going. Those who believe the times are good announce that 70 percent of our students graduate; that 7.5 million students are in our colleges today; that 85 percent of today's 30-year-olds have diplomas. But what of those who don't graduate? "Prospects are nil for those in the 30 percent," Herbert said. The diploma is the passport into society.

According to some statistics, drug use may be down, said Herbert. But in New York high schools, students wearing beepers are routinely stopped in the halls because a beeper is an indicator that the young person purports to be in the drug network. "The irony," said Herbert, "is that more often than not when we stop a young person with a beeper, it's a fake." It is the symbol that is so important.

Young people today grapple with marketing messsages that seem to encourage them to start drinking early. Young people today still experiment with sex. And young people are dying -- from homicide, suicide, accidents -- incidents, Herbert said, that almost always involve some foreign substance. And they leave school. Why?

Herbert explained that every dropout he ever talked with in New York said, "I quit because no one cared." He said he knows that's not always true, but the fact that the words come so quickly to their mouths must make us wonder.

What must we do? Herbert encourages more collaboration among schools, the community, and the private sector. The private sector, he said, needs to ventilate its frustrations, but for the most part, it is willing to help by offering incentives, mentors, and employment opportunities.

The private sector can become the surrogate middle class parent. Herbert told of the deal he negotiated with Random House to provide a dictionary for every entering ninth grader in the city. Since physical education is a frequently failed course, the schools enlisted the help of a professional New York athlete. On three different occasions, he invited 80 students to have dinner with him before a game.

Herbert acknowledged that developing mentor programs involves a much more difficult relationship, and getting support from the business community for summer, part-time, and after graduation jobs had not been as successful in New York as it had in other areas.

Teachers need encouragement, too, Herbert said, because although teachers can make a difference, they also build an immunity to listening. "It's not easy to be a Statue of Liberty saying 'give me your poor and huddled masses,' because if you do, they will -- there are so few caring adults in their lives."

Is it possible to pursue the reluctant student with the same energy as we do the eager and the willing? It's possible, said Herbert, but educators rarely get the three necessary pieces together: families who are able, schools that are responsive, and students who believe it's worth the pain.

In closing, Herbert said he believes intervention can change things and save children. He quoted a public service announcement of Bill Cosby's, "If we do not do something about the problem of at-risk youth, it will do something about us."

General Session A: High School Students at Risk, Thursday, August 18

Keynote Speaker: **Robert E. Taylor, Executive Director and Professor Emeritus, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, and Principal, Taylor & Taylor Research, Training, and Educational Services, 35 McMillen Rd., Silver City, NM 88061**
"Education and Work: Improving the Uncertain Connection"

In his opening remarks on the merits of vocational eduction, Robert Taylor stressed the importance of education in the revitalization of the American economy. He believes that through the partnership of business and education we can slowly rebuild our leadership role in the highly competitive world market.

The rebuilding will be a slow process requiring the interdependency of all systems -- business, political and educational. Taylor emphasized the importance of the process saying, "We can't lead if we cannot compete." He added that technology plays a major role in competition. The work place must reflect advances in both equipment and techniques.

Taylor cited changes in the work place and work force that reinforce the need for quality education. In many cases, a job has become more than a set of physical skills. There has been a dramatic increase in the need for team work and interpersonal communication skills among employers and employees. Further, the work force is maturing. The average age of an employee in this country is 39. As technology changes these workers will need retraining.

He went on to focus on the composition of the upcoming work force. An overall decline in the birth rate exists in this country, but in low socioeconomic and minority groups the birth rate continues to rise. By the year 2000, 82 percent of the new entrants into the work force will be women, minorities, and immigrants. This, said Taylor, is the most critical concern of American business.

What are the effects of the changing demographics on education? First, for each year that a child lives in poverty, his or her chance of being below grade level increases by 2.5 percent. Second, socioeconomic level has a far greater effect on the dropout rate than race alone. Third, students from poor families are three to four times more likely to drop out than rich students. And fourth, the influx of legal and illegal aliens means an increased need to educate both young and old to make them language proficient. Taylor said our education system has some serious problems to address if we are going maintain or improve our current economic status.

Taylor said educational reform should focus on several areas in order to deal with reduced federal spending, an increasing "at-risk" population, and the changing demographics in this country. First, schools must meet the needs of all students. Second, we must remember that all of society educates people. This includes the media, business, etc. Third, the solutions and interventions must be as comprehensive as the problems. Finally, we must seek powerful allies in the business community and provide for sustained collaboration.

Further, Taylor said schools should be restructured to accomplish the following: 1) increased time on task, in other words a full year program and longer days; 2) more experiments with the idea of "community schools" that are multi-agency sponsored and that meet the human needs of the community; 3) changes in vocational education to enable individual growth, applied learning, and applicability; 4) better exit tests to assess progress on learning; 5) enabling individuals to become agents of their own learning; and 6) improving the uncertain connection with business and the world of work.

Human resources are our most precious resources. To develop these resources we must establish a genuine partnership between business and education with interactions that are active and sustained. And because 90 percent of all businesses have less than 20 employees, the focus of vocational education should be on small businesses.

Vocational education works, Taylor said. Studies have shown improved retention, higher placement success, and that graduates are eight times more likely to go into their own business. Investing in education is investing in prevention.

Speaker: **Carlos Azcoitia, Director, Bureau of Vocational Support Services, Chicago Public Schools, 1819 W. Pershing Rd., Chicago, IL 60609**
"Reaching Out to Students through Vocational and Career Education"

Carlos Azcoitia has identified seven key components contributing to the success of his vocational education program. One, the program focuses on the individual student. Two, a team approach exists within the individual high school, and the focus is on positive interaction and problem solving. Three, the program has a programmatic approach with assessment tools selected according to the individual needs of the student. Four, the schools in the program have a vocational/academic resource center that includes computer-assisted instruction and applied settings for basic skills instruction. Five, the program has a component for those with limited English proficiency or those who have disabilities. Six, the program has a peer-tutoring component. And seven, the articulation component reveals what happens to students after they complete the program.

The objectives of Azcoitia's program are to prepare students for the world of work, for advanced technical training, or for colleges and universities. But he stressed that the focus of all programs at this level should be dropout prevention.

Azcoitia believes that when all of the above characteristics are present and everyone is made aware of the objectives, a program will be successful. He said that adding such components as vocational labs for students, an advocacy role for parents, and a better integration of math and communication skills will further ensure the success of a vocational education program.

Speaker: **Sandra G. Pritz, Senior Associate, The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1960 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH 43210-1090**
"Basics for Students at Risk: A Vocational-Academic Approach"

Inadequate basic skills is the primary factor impeding the success of at-risk students, according to Sandra Pritz. Therefore, in the case of the vocational education student, the integration of vocational and academic skills in a mutually applied setting is a powerful tool.

Pritz described dropout prevention as a multi-faceted problem. At-risk students are characterized as having poor basic skills in association with poor general academics, low self-concept, low self-esteem, a high level of hostility, apathy toward school, and a high rate of absenteeism. Because of this set of characteristics, Pritz said a program that combines success in basic skills and vocational training is the key to a successful dropout prevention program.

Application plays a major role for the at-risk student in a vocational education program. These students typically have a strong work orientation, and when they can see the value of an academic skill to their job they become more motivated. Not surprisingly, a lack of academic relevance has been shown to cause a lack of persistence among this population of students, Pritz said.

Successful vocational education programs must incorporate the individual student's learning style and use a greater variety of instructional approaches to meet the needs of each student. They must help students improve problem-solving skills and their reasoning and logic abilities.

Neither vocational skills nor academic skills should be taught in isolation, said Pritz. For a successful program, the curriculum must include academic basic skills that are embedded in vocational tasks, and in turn, vocational tasks that provide for the realistic use of basic skills.

Speaker: **Diane Miller, Guidance and Counseling, Dropout Prevention, Minnesota Department of Education, 930 B Capitol Square Bldg., 550 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55101**

In Minnesota, 91.4 percent of the students graduate from high school, and it is the governor's goal that by 1996, 96 percent will graduate.

Why does the state have such a high success rate? First, said Diane Miller, families place a very high priority on education. Second, the weather virtually forces students to go to school just to see their friends. And third, Minnesota has an options program that allows students and their parents to select the appropriate educational setting. Consequently, students who have dropped out or are considering it because of incompatibility with a traditional school program can select from a group of alternative programs.

Miller stated that unfortunately the emphasis on education in Minnesota comes from economic rather than humanistic concerns. It costs $23,000 a year to incarcerate a person. Welfare costs are skyrocketing. The labor pool is diminishing, and business is getting concerned. A lack of federal funding and responsibility means state governments have to take over.

In 1987, Minnesota lawmakers passed the High School Graduation Incentives Legislation and improved it in 1988 by increasing the age limitation. Providing for students who cannot handle a regular school setting, the program is open to students age 16 to 21 who 1) are two grades below normal as tested on an achievement test or one year behind in credits for graduation, or 2) are pregnant, assessed as chemically dependent or have missed 15 consecutive days of school. The 1988 legislation adds the group of economically disadvantaged students who are 21 years or older but have less than 14 years of education or who dropped out before the tenth grade.

Students in the program who are age 16 to 21 may select from a public or non-sectarian high school, area learning center, post secondary, vocational or technical school or college, or an alternative education center. The students may select a school in any district, but the district they choose gets their residency funds.

A major media blitz was required to disseminate information about the program. Program administrators were required to notify all persons under the age of 21 that the program existed and was available. Businesses, such as grocery stores, aided the dissemination effort by placing notices on their grocery bags.

Miller explained that funding was made available for exemplary area learning centers that met the following criteria: 1) they served at least two geographical areas (school districts); 2) participants had access to all regular education programs, materials, and facilities ; 3) provisions were made for student eligibility in outreach activities in the business community; 4) academic and vocational learning, work experience, and aid in transition were available; 5) the student could select an area for which a diploma was issued; and 6) the center served as a resource center for other programs.

Speaker: **John Lloyd, Assistant Principal, Robbinsdale Cooper High School, 8412 E. Meadow Lake Rd., New Hope, MN 55428 (John Lloyd also is Principal of Highview Alternative Programs and President of the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs)**
"Alternative Programs: Do They Work?"

The keys to implementation of at-risk programs are money and formal organization, said John Lloyd. But the key to success is remembering that there is no typical at-risk student. Each case is unique. "In Minnesota, it is not okay for a student not to return to school," he said. Nor is it acceptable for a school to be without a program to which a student could return.

In outlining the steps for organizing an effective program, Lloyd advised the audience to think small, control what they want to do, and build in success. He said educators should give time, be patient, and make corrections without undue penalty to the students or the program. Lloyd also said educators must take risks, look for the positive and reinforce it, accept and evaluate failure, and set limits. To organize an effective alternative program, one needs time and money to develop curriculum and get it in place.

According to Lloyd, the model program will identify the task in simple and clear language, outline the available resources, identify the time factor, and identify for students the type of assessment used.

In conclusion, Lloyd stated that successful programs teach students how to use community resources. The result of a successful program is successful students, and then the program sells itself.

General Session B: Preschool and Elementary Students at Risk, Thursday, August 18

Keynote Speaker: **Henry M. Levin, Director and Professor, Center for Educational Research at Stanford, School of Education, Stanford University, CERAS Bldg., Stanford, CA 94305**
"Lessons Learned on Teacher and Parent Empowerment"

In his opening remarks, Henry Levin stressed the need for accelerated schools for elementary at-risk students. Levin believes that these students must be in the educational mainstream prior to entering high school to avoid "rescue programs" that do not have a high success rate. He emphasized the need to create conditions that bring at-risk students into the economic, social, and political mainstream. Our society depends on such changes to ensure our ability to compete with other nations at all levels.

Why are at-risk students failing in traditional schools? Levin said the schools are not designed for success. At-risk students are without many of the social and academic skills that others have. They simply do not have the prerequisite skills for successful learning. To deal with the problem, schools typically have identified a student's "at-risk" behavior and then placed the student in some kind of remediation program, Levin said.

These programs and systems are failing, and Levin cited six reasons for the failure. First, the programs typically slow down the students' pace. This, in turn, slows down the ultimate progress the student will make and prevents the student from being mainstreamed. Second, at-risk students often are stigmatized as poor learners thus creating a poor emotional setting for them. Third, schools often have a "joyless" or "drill and kill" approach to learning the basics with programs that do not use background knowledge to motivate the student. Fourth, failing programs frequently are characterized by having a process without any goals. Levin cited bilingual education as the reverse example of this condition. Bilingual education has a clear goal: bring these students into the linguistic mainstream. But the methods are often a source of disagreement. Fifth, the people who implement the programs, the teachers, usually have little or no say in the development or evaluation of the program. These teachers are simply handed a program and left on their own. And sixth, typical programs view parents as a problem, Levin said. Successful programs cannot operate without the help and support of the parents.

What is the solution? Levin said a successful program is a dynamic one. Children come to school full of wonder and curiosity. They also come with a set of problem-solving skills. After all, they have learned the very complicated task of communicating their needs and wishes. We must continue what they have started by reinforcing their natural abilities. Levin also stressed the importance of group work and the dynamics of human interaction for this population of students. The responsibility for these changes is at the school site and includes the parents, students, and support staff.

Emphasis should be placed on all forms of language development with the focus on writing and oral discourse. A successful program should undergo continual internal evaluations. And finally, Levin said, the program should utilize all community resources. This includes health department personnel, seniors, and parent volunteers to assist with tutoring.

Implementation of a successful program involves three main principles, Levin said. The first is Unity of Purpose. The school should function as a team that works together to outline a specific set of goals that will be followed by actions. These goals must include making kids academically able by the end of sixth grade. The school team must work closely with the central office so that all levels of personnel take part in the project.

The second is Empowerment and Responsibility. School failure is often paired with a feeling of helplessness and excuses with no one accepting the responsibility for the problem. This must change, Levin said. Decisionmaking must be placed in the hands of the people who are responsible -- the teachers, support staff, and resource people. These people then must be held accountable for their actions.

The third is Building on Strengths. Typically we have focused on the negative. We are critical of other educators, and there is no mutual support. A successful program emphasizes acceptance and praise. One example cited is an oral language program for at-risk young children. They come to school far more prepared to talk than to read or write. Why not start out with success?

Levin discussed the notion of empowerment, stressing that empowerment for the teacher is developmental in nature. It should happen gradually, with support and education. Empowerment for the parent is essential. Parents love their children and want to see them succeed. Examples of successful parent components are parent resource centers, monthly parent meetings, and programs such as Family Math.

In summary, Levin said curricular and instruction intervention are critical for reform to occur. We must change the entire way schools function, and develop cooperation within the schools. Staff development along with new materials is a strong part of a successful implementation program.

Speaker: **Deborah Wortham, Assistant Principal, Abbottston Elementary School, Baltimore, MD; Program Facilitator/Success for All, The Johns Hopkins University, 3505 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218**
"Success for All"

A joint venture between Baltimore Public Schools and the Johns Hopkins University, the Success for All program is based on the premise that at-risk youths are failing basic skills and that this problem can be predicted as early as third grade.

The program began with a two-year planning period that focussed on the idea that it is possible and necessary for every child to succeed. Recommendations from the planning group included the following points: 1) the best place for at-risk students is in the class; 2) the program must be responsive to each student's needs; and 3) there must be flexible resources within the school.

Abbottston Elementary School was chosen as the site of implementation because of its low socioeconomic student population (85 percent of the students receive free lunch); because the school had adequate space; and because there was complete agreement to participate in the program.

Six reading tutors who were certified teachers of reading participated in the program. They worked one-on-one with students to tutor, offer support, and serve as additional teachers of reading.

The students were grouped by reading levels according to the Durrell Reading Test. The groups consisted of up to 15 students from grades 1 - 3. There were no dittos and no seat work. Whole class teaching was the order of business, and the teacher had direct contact with the students at all times. Following assessment every six weeks, students either remained with their group, were assigned to a higher group, or were assigned a reading tutor.

The program also had a family support team consisting of two full-time social workers and one parent liaison. The teams visited the home of every student in the school.

The specific reading program consisted of 90 minutes of reading instruction per day. Each reading period was further divided into 30-minute sections that included STAR (story telling and retelling), decoding instruction and practice, and work in the Peabody Language Kit. Wortham presented a videotape that demonstrated how the program worked. It illustrated how the story setting helped activate students' prior knowledge and make the learning relevant.

Program results have been quite positive, Wortham said. One year prior to implementation, 33 students had been screened for special education services. One year following implementation, only six students were screened for special education services.

Speaker: **Michael Alexander, Principal, Guggenheim Elementary School, 7141 S. Morgan, Chicago, IL 60621**

Michael Alexander discussed the success of his school's accelerated learning program. He began by leading the audience through a relaxation exercise, one of the instructional techniques used in the Guggenheim School Experience. He asked the audience to identify and order the planets in our solar system. Then he told a story that included the names of the nine planets. When he asked the audience to try and name the planets again, they showed a marked improvement. Students in his program at school showed this same type of improvement when factual information took on a new dimension.

Schools with large populations of at-risk students often find discipline to be the critical problem for teachers and administrators, Alexander said. These students are failing. They are unhappy, and the causes usually stem from some problem at home. Alexander stressed that the school cannot solve these home problems. But to help them cope with the situation, Alexander advises students to compartmentalize their lives. When they are in school, he tells them, they are in a safe place where people care about them. They must learn to leave their home problems at the front door of the school.

The Guggenheim program has two basic tenets. First, acceptance is the only prerequisite to learning. The teacher must accept what the student brings to the situation, and both the teacher and the student must take the responsibility for learning. Second, prior to entering school young children learn in very natural ways. Schools must maintain the natural learning abilities of children.

Alexander described some of the ways they try to capture students' natural learning abilities. One is to offer experiences such as the one he used to open his presentation. He feels strongly about setting the stage for remembering. Drama, surprise, and role-playing are some of the other techniques they use. He also suggests the use of classical or baroque music to bring the student into a relaxed state for learning. The goal of all of this is "one year's growth for one year of instruction," he said.

The Guggenheim Project began when Alexander was given $100,000 to spend in three months. He knew he wanted to focus on supporting teachers and enhancing their abilities to teach. His decision was based on a previous analysis that indicated the best element of Guggenheim was the teaching force.

The training began with one-half of the teachers taking 30 hours of course work in suggestive accelerated learning. Within the context of the instruction, the teacher was made the person responsible for learning. As is typical with many types of training, the program was not used systematically, and there was only sporadic follow-up training.

Consequently, said Alexander, things did not run too smoothly. In an attempt to save the project, Alexander proposed that a cadre of teachers be trained as facilitators of the program to provide support and assistance to all of the teachers in the project. This cadre of teachers spent one weekend each month, without pay, and the results were astonishing. The enthusiasm of these facilitators spilled over to the teaching force, and the impact on the school was outstanding. Student behavior changed. Teachers and students were speaking with each other outside the curriculum. In-school fighting stopped. Students started speaking in a positive manner. In that year, students in the Guggenheim Project received 30 percent of the prizes in the district academic contest. There was a 97.5 percent teacher attendance rate.

Parent behavior also changed. They began to play classical or baroque music at home while their children studied. They volunteered to supervise the lunchroom and took a positive approach to discipline problems. Even their own attitudes about life took a turn for the positive.

Speaker: **Charles Edwards, Dean, College of Education, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Platteville, WI 53818**
"Promising Programs for Middle School Students at Risk"

Before beginning his presentation, Charles Edwards expressed disappointment that there were so few representatives of higher education in the audience. He stressed the importance of collaboration among all levels of education to improve the situation for at-risk students. "Those in higher education need to be here with you working side by side because this is a group activity," he said.

Edwards focused on children at risk in the middle school. The young adolescent in grades 5-9 needs help, he said. These students are going through multi-faceted changes, and they are ill-prepared to take on any type of leadership roles. It is at this point that small losses in the previous years have accumulated into failure. He emphasized the importance of reaching at-risk students in the early grades to prevent this situation from occurring. But because the problem does exist, educators must find ways to deal with the very specific problems of the at-risk early adolescent.

Edwards cited some specific characteristics of this population. These students are going through tremendous body changes; they are embarrassed; and they have a poor self concept. They are moving from the concrete to the abstract in their cognitive and academic development. They are probably going through many social changes; if family structures are not intact, their social family takes on increased importance. And they are experiencing major emotional swings between elation and depression and aggressive and non-aggressive behaviors.

At the University of Wisconsin at Platteville is a Center for the Education of the Young Adolescent which is recognized as a center of excellence for the state, explained Edwards. Their summer workshop brings together 750 public school teachers, principals, and counselors who work as a team for one week. The Center also brings in 14 national consultants to work with the teams for the week. Teams work on specific projects and develop missions and goals to take back for implementation in their districts. The Center keeps data about these projects on computer.

The workshop program has a networking component, said Edwards. Staff members from schools that have successfully implemented these projects serve as consultants to others interested in them. Edwards distributed handouts that described some of the projects. One project focused on effectively meeting the needs of academically high risk students by improving the reading level of low-level readers, motivating the uninspired learner, improving study skills and improving parental attitudes. Others included strategies to help at-risk children in the classroom; strategies to motivate apathetic students; crisis intervention; and how to help parents cope with and understand their children. Each project has been evaluated at the end of the year, and each description includes a section on implementation guidelines. Edwards said additional information about these projects could be obtained by contacting him at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

In closing, Edwards told the audience to remember that groups of factors, not single factors, put children at risk. These groups of factors come from three sources: 1) the family, 2) the individual, and 3) the school.

General Session C: Rural Students at Risk, Thursday, August 18

Keynote Speaker: **Glen Shaw, Executive Director, Southwest/West Central Educational Cooperative Service Unit, P.O. Box 547, Marshall, MN 56258**
"America's Forgotten Children: Rural and At Risk"

Although it may receive far less attention than its urban counterpart, the problem of students at risk in rural America is nonetheless dramatic, according to Glen Shaw. Two-thirds of America's school districts are in rural areas, one-third -- 15 million -- of America's children live in rural areas, and nearly three-fourths of the 16,023 school districts are classified as "small".

Shaw framed his presentation with a remark made by a group of foreign educators that had been visiting schools around the country. After completing their tour they met with the President, and one of their first questions was, "Is the Great American Experiment over?" They were referring to the commitment to educate children of all people.

What factors are contributing to the at-risk population? Shaw cited changing family and social structures as primary causes. More than 40 percent of all marriages end in divorce; 70 percent of all teenage marriages end in divorce. There are 8.7 million single parent families. In 1979 the number of heavy industry jobs decreased by 2 million, and these jobs were replaced with ones offering poverty-level wages.

America has the nineteenth highest infant mortality rate in the world. Of the 2 to 3 million homeless in this country, 20 percent have children, and 50 percent of those children have some sort of physical impairment. These children are not receiving care, Shaw said.

Some 33 million people are living below the poverty level, and an additional 20-30 million people are considered needy. This number is increasing at a rapid rate because nothing is being done to change the system. We are becoming a country of a few with much and a lot with little, Shaw said. And our society is aging, with 30 percent of the population over age 65 and just 3 percent under age 21.

Specifically referring to rural America, Shaw cited the End of the Road, a document published by the Council for Educational Development and Research. In this document the writers claim that 2.2 million students in 2,700 rural school districts are living in chronic, severe poverty. Young people today are seven times as likely to be poor as those over the age of 65.

Stress, depression, and suicide are prevalent among young people in this country regardless of their geographic setting. Teenage suicide is up 150 percent; drug use is up 60 percent. Each year there are 1.3 million teenage pregnancies, and these young mothers and their babies cost $13.8 billion to support. This means that we have children at-risk giving birth to children at-risk, Shaw said. The problem is perpetuating itself.

Further stressing the economic implications of at-risk youths, Shaw stated that it costs a state $39,000 a year to incarcerate a prisoner, and 80 percent of all prisoners are high school dropouts.

Shaw believes that four major areas need funding in order to address all of these problems: 1) early intervention and adequate health care, 2) interagency cooperation, 3) school restructuring, and 4) parent involvement and parent education.

Speaker: **Sharon K. Roberts, Educational Consultant, Department of Rural Education, Illinois State Board of Education, Suite 214, First Bank and Trust Bldg., Mt. Vernon, IL 62864**

In 1986, the Illinois State Board of Education established a Department of Rural Education in response to studies that indicated rural, small schools had unique problems, began Sharon Roberts. Then she cited some of the changes the United States has experienced. The country has evolved from a primarily agrarian nation to an industrial one, Roberts said, and we are now leaving the industrial era and entering the information age. The amount of new information is doubling every two to three years.

Geographic changes have occurred as well. The once industrial north has gone south. By the year 2020, it is projected that most people will be in urban/suburban areas. At the world level, the United States is no longer economically independent.

These changes have serious implications for rural America, and more specifically, for education in rural America. Changes are occurring in rural communities, and many of them are in desperate economic situations. Students in these communities will be more dependent on education to deal with alternatives and to deal with technology.

Students in rural education programs need the same access to programs as their urban counterparts, Roberts said. The schools must develop a new view of learning for these students and find ways to meet the needs of technocracy. Specific problems inhibiting progress are sparsity of population, resulting in a lack of funding; restricted staff; and a lack of curriculum materials.

In 1986, the Illinois State Board of Education made a commitment to improving learning opportunities for rural education. The Department of Rural Education considers the promotion of technology and telecommunications as a viable alternative to improving programs in rural and small enrollment schools, said Roberts. One Illinois rural education initiative involving NCREL is scheduled to begin in the fall, and it includes plans to utilize high technology for rural Illinois.

Other aspects of the initiative involve partnerships with institutions of higher education including programs in the arts and humanities, global education, reading improvement, guidance and counseling, and advanced placement.

Speakers: **Judi Elliott and Kim Schonert, Rural Researchers, University of Iowa, N459 Lindquist Center, Iowa City, IA 52242**

Judi Elliott began this team presentation with some background on their research on rural students at risk. Phase one of their research began in 1986 when Elliott became part of NCREL's students-at-risk data base team. Her assignment was to investigate educational risk in rural Iowa schools.

She used three Iowa schools for her study, and she made her selections to find as characteristic a sample as possible of the entire rural population in Iowa. For example, one school was primarily rural-agricultural, the second was rural-blue collar, and the third was a combination of the two. The schools also provided a mix in terms of economic stability so that none was particularly financially strapped nor particularly wealthy. Elliott conducted audio interviews at each school, focusing on each teacher and 6 to 12 students in each grade level.

After reviewing her data, Elliott concluded that the most critical element facing NCREL's team in terms of creating a data base for rural students was moving away from the urban model. Her data raised serious questions in her mind about academic achievement, career and vocational counseling, and post-secondary continuation rates, but some of the issues typically associated with at-risk populations in urban settings were missing. She did not find high incidences of teen pregnancy, a high dropout rate, or extensive drug abuse.

Kim Schonert joined Elliott for the second phase of the project, the goal of which was to get a comprehensive picture of the rural high school population in Iowa. From Iowa's 425 school districts, the researchers decided to make their selections from the 98 districts with enrollments under 300. They chose 11 districts from that group, and their sample consisted of 226 graduates of the 1983 high school class. The interest level and enthusiasm of school personnel, parents, and the graduates themselves for the study were extremely high. A 15-page survey was mailed to this group, and Elliott and Schonert had an initial response rate of 81 percent. In addition, they were able to contact 35 to 40 percent of the non-respondents by phone.

Elliott said some interesting general characteristics emerged among the respondents. For example, as their first choice, the majority did not want to leave their communities. The group was very interested in providing input to their former schools or to the schools their children will attend. In order of priority, they wanted successful employment, a happy family life, leisure time, and opportunities for their children. Making a lot of money usually appeared near the bottom of their priority list.

Parents appeared to be the most influential people in the respondents' lives. More than 80 percent of respondents indicated first their mother and then their father had the most influence in post-secondary decisions. When asked who had no influence in these decisions, 60 percent of the respondents said their school counselors. Other findings included the following: members of the rural communities appeared to have a high level of perseverance; students in rural schools tend to participate in many more extra-curricular activities than their urban counterparts; rural students appear to have a higher sense of community than their urban counterparts. These behaviors tend to build self-esteem and responsibility.

Career planning is vital, said the researchers. Students in rural school have limited knowledge of career possibilities, and they need current, accurate information.

Speaker: **Margaret Wilsman, Manager of Research, Education Services, Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks, 3319 West Beltline Hwy., Madison, WI 53713-2899**

Margaret Wilsman outlined her presentation with three main points: 1) literacy is the ability to read as a citizen in a democracy, and therefore a right of every citizen; 2) telecommunications can be used in conjunction with school restructuring and staff development; and 3) there must be a commitment to equity among all people in a community.

The Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project is a cooperative effort of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Public Radio and Television Networks, NCREL, and 18 small, rural school districts. It began in 1987 when NCREL awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to two Wisconsin state agencies to conduct a project designed to improve reading instruction in rural districts with K-12 enrollments of fewer than 900 students. The project uses a variety of "distance" (telecommunications) technologies to deliver staff development to the participating schools as well as to link them to each other and to the project staff.

The components of the project include 14 half-hour videos on how to teach reading as thinking, video-computer materials, and the Wisconsin Reading Guide. One of the project's critical elements is extensive outside evaluation.

Materials alone are ineffective in enhancing reading. Poor readers don't learn to read by reading more, Wilsman said. They need to learn what good readers do. One of the barriers to better reading instruction is that teachers often find it difficult to change the way they teach. Thus, the old methods keep producing the same results. One way to rectify this situation is to establish a leadership team to implement the change, according to Wilsman. In the Wisconsin project, the team includes the principal, the reading specialist, and the library-media specialist.

The project is currently in its second year, and one of the issues encountered has been the perceived focus of the project. Administrators see the focus as technology utilization whereas the true focus is on content and staff development. In addition, concluded Wilsman, many administrators do not see staff development as an evolutionary process that takes time and money.

Speaker: **Thomas Schwandt, Department of Educational Psychology, Northern Illinois University, Graham Hall 411, DeKalb, IL 60115**

Thomas Schwandt said several key issues emerged during his evaluation of the Wisconsin Rural Reading Improvement Project including the following: What was the composition of the district team, and how did the team function? What was the role of the reading specialist? How did the technology function? How were print materials used? How did this project fit with others?

Although believing it was too early to assess the project's impact, Schwandt discussed several factors in the implementation process. First, definitions seemd to vary among the participants. One school thought of the project as an inservice training. Another thought of it as a reading project that focused on strategies. Still another thought of it primarily as a technology-at-a-distance project.

Second, in a number of districts project champions emerged who spearheaded the implementation. The success of the project in a district depended heavily on this person. Third, there was some difference in understanding whether the project was a one-way or a two-way technology project; the ideal is two-way. And fourth, implementation difficulties could be attributed to many of the same factors as any school improvement or staff development project.

Speakers: **Paul Nachtigal, Director, Rural Education Program, and Toni Haas, Director for Regional Programs, Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory, 12500 East Iliff, Suite 201, Aurora, CO 80014**

Paul Nachtigal and Toni Haas emphasized the danger in making generalizations about rural populations because too many differences exist among them. They stressed the importance of eliminating restrictions, increasing the access to role models, and providing better academic preparation in order to help rural students entering adulthood recognize their options.

They described three projects within McRel's rural education program. Access is the name of a current project in the northwest quadrant of Missouri. The goal is to provide assistance for better career choices by means of increased help for guidance counselors, more information sharing, networking within the district, better test preparation, networking with agencies in the community, and building a cadre of role models or mentors from the local community.

Focusing on the use of technology to expand instructional knowledge, the North Dakota Technology Project is establishing interactive video communication.

The third project is in West River, South Dakota, and emphasizes the role of the rural school in the community. In many rural areas, the school prepares students to leave the local community. Children leave after receiving an education because few economic opportunities exist for them; consequently, their departure leads to further economic decline in the community. New jobs need to be developed around entrepreneurship in small businesses.

Nachtigal and Haas outlined some ways the schools could play a larger role in community and economic development. They said the goal or mission of the school needs to be reexamined and expanded beyond the confines of K-12.

The schools also must take an active role in the survival of the community. One way to do this to involve the students in a serious study of the community. They need to understand the importance of their role in the community and the effects of their staying or leaving. Students need to know that there are still niches to be filled and that community growth is possible.

General Session D: Special Populations of Students at Risk, Thursday August 18

Keynote Speaker: **Carol Bradley, Assistant to the President, Iowa State University,. Ames, IA 50011**

"I think this is the most exciting and optimistic time possible for those who are concerned about and who work with special populations," said Carol Bradley in her opening remarks. She supported her belief with the statement that education, labor, business, and government are sharing the same goals for all children regarding education that those in special education have advocated for many years. The two goals are a zero dropout rate and establishment of programs that will help all students achieve their full potential.

Cliches now have become truth, Bradley said. "I think when we say 'children are our most precious resource,' it's meant." Emphasizing statistics of demographer Harold Hodgkinson, Bradley said in 1950 there were 17 workers paying the benefits for every senior citizen. It is projected that in 1992, there will be only three workers for every senior citizen, and one of them will be minority. Youth will be in short supply in America.

Bradley went on to cite Henry Levin regarding the haves and the have-nots. A two-tiered system is bound to lead to a deterioration of the work force and escalation of public assistance. Those views are shared by the political, governmental, business, and labor communities in this nation, Bradley said. "For those of you over the years who have had to convince other educators, taxpayers, and judicial systems that educating special students to vocational competence, to as independent a living arrangement as possible, and to as full a social participation as possible, these words should be music to your ears -- that these children have picked up such powerful allies across our system."

Syntheses of the literature on classroom practices and characteristics from the effective schools movement has emphasized that effective schools have strong leadership guiding the curriculum, clear goals and high expectations, and recognition and rewards for excellence.

In addition to looking at what makes schools effective, Bradley said educators must also look at the school improvement efforts because they show how to implement effective schools' characteristics. In Iowa, a cadre of individuals from the Department of Education and the Area Education Agencies reviewed the literature and compiled a list of six primary components necessary for implementation of school improvement projects. They are 1) high quality, reasearch-based improvement programs; 2) outcome- and process-based accountability; 3) up-front training for local capacity building; 4) long-term continual observation, feedback, and coaching; 5) cross-role team building from all personnel levels; and 6) expertise from technically competent outside agents. The instructional focus should be on critical thinking and problem solving. Bradley said this is what special educators have been saying all along.

The internal structure of schools is being studied, and new approaches are being tried. For years, the internal structure had been based on a principally industrial model intended for mass production. The administrative model came primarily from the military. New models now are being investigated that should make students better prepared for the information age, Bradley said. These models are characterized by shared decisionmaking, more collegial models of organization in elementary and secondary schools, and student and teacher empowerment. Bradley thinks these models will provide environments more suited to those with learning and behavioral problems in ways that the industrial/military models could not.

All of these conditions taken together bode well for special students, said Bradley. They suggest that the time may be near when a student is a student with strengths and weaknesses, abilities and disabilities, likes and dislikes, and not a learning-disabled, mentally-retarded, behavior-disordered, or physically-handicapped student. These conditions suggest that a blurring of the lines among general education, special education, vocational education, and college preparatory education could actually occur. They also suggest that educators with various specialties could be organized as teaching teams. They suggest that the millions of dollars spent on sorting children to qualify for particular programs could be spent on providing education and support services to children and their families.

Speaker: **Kim Schonert, Rural Researcher, N459 Lindquist Center, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242**

Kim Schonert's presentation featured the differences in moral reasoning education at regular and alternative high schools. She defined moral reasoning as how individuals "develop a sense of right or wrong and a set of ethical values to use throughout their lives."

Behavior-disordered adolescents often are characterized as people who lie, cheat, steal, and have truancy problems, Schonert said. They have a serious deficit in social skills which are a prerequisite to reasoning. They also have extreme difficulty in interpersonal relationships, especially with parents, peers, and teachers.

Previous research on moral reasoning and deviant populations has concentrated only on delinquent groups, Schonert said. Rather than concentrating on juvenile delinquents in her study, however, Schonert focused on students in three kinds of academic settings: behavior-disordered (BD) students in alternative programs, BD students in resource rooms in traditional schools, and non-BD students in traditional school settings. She began her work by testing students' moral reasoning development or how they deal with right and wrong. She found that the students were very interested in participating.

From the test groups, Schonert found that moral reasoning was higher in the non-BD group and that there was no significant difference between the BD students in the alternative school and the BD students in the traditional school.

Schonert was curious about these results. She had assumed that alternative programs would foster a higher level of moral reasoning development by the fact they were usually places students had chosen and wanted to be. She could only assume that the students' cognitive abilities and social skills were lower, thus impeding their growth.

Moral reasoning development is related to behavior, Schonert said, and short interventions such as moral education programs and discussions have resulted in various behavioral improvements including academic ones.

Speaker: **Virginia Dixon, Regional Manager for the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, San Bernardino, CA (formerly director of special services for ISD 535 in Rochester, Minnesota,)**
"Partnerships of Parents and Professionals"

Virginia Dixon began her discussion by giving the audience some insight into her background. As a teacher in Harlem, she believed she had learned as much, if not more, from her students than they from her. From this experience, Dixon said she gained a true understanding of the importance of both the human element in working with at-risk youths and the sincerity of the commitment one makes to serve this population.

In Rochester, Minnesota, Dixon helped parents understand that their child was okay even if he or she was not as intelligent as other children of the same age and that school social workers could help them deal with their own frustration and anger.

We typically forget the importance of healthy dialogue between parents and teachers, she said. Dixon stressed the importance of what she calls "Dignity for All." She believes this can be accomplished when school staff pays attention to the parent and is genuinely interested in what the parent has to say.

Speaker: **Peggy Clapp, Lady Pitts School, Lincoln Downtown Educational Center, 820 E. Knapp St., Milwaukee, WI 53202-2799**

Lady Pitts School was created in 1968 by 40 community women in Milwaukee who saw the need to get pregnant teens back into school. Initially, the public school turned the community group away saying there was no need for such service. The Urban League offered support, and finally the group wrote a grant to operate a private school for three years as a demonstration project.

According to Peggy Clapp, those 40 women became social work aides. They went out to the community for support, and they worked with pregnant girls and their parents. As a result of their efforts, additional community support was enlisted. The Milwaukee Health Department ran the prenatal health class at the school; the Department of Social Services together with the Catholic and Luternan social service groups operated the family life education program. The school also hired three certificated teachers (not from Milwaukee Public Schools) to teach classes.

After the three years, Milwaukee Public Schools accepted Lady Pitts School and assumed control. Milwaukee Public Schools provided a building, teachers, two social workers, one psychologist, a nurse, and a guidance counselor. "The social service agencies continued working with us," said Clapp. These agencies are not paid by the school nor under contract to be paid. Clapp said they have been willing to work because they saw the need and were given the opportunity. The Health Department provides a 12-month nurse who works in addition to the 10-month nurse provided by Milwaukee Public Schools.

An exciting example of community support, said Clapp, is the child development Infant/Parent Learning Lab that is operated on-site by the Carter's company. This is a day-care program that can accommodate 30 infants from one month of age, and the program is free to Lady Pitts students. Carter's opened its main site just three miles away and works with Lady Pitts to accommodate additional children.

Lady Pitts school serves 125 students each semester. Special programs and activities have included an Artist in Residence, which was encouraged by the community to help the students' self-image through art expression. In the fall of 1988, Clapp said the Milwaukee area technical college would conduct nine-week courses in assertiveness training. Rape and incenst counseling sessions for 40 students also were scheduled for the 1988-89 year.

The Lady Pitts advisory committee formed a community support committee that wrote a three-year grant and hired a college graduate who had been a teen parent. This follow-through worker, as she is called, works with 15 students who leave Lady Pitts to return to regular high school. Since less than 50 percent of Lady Pitts students who return to regular school make it during the first nine weeks of the semester, the follow-through worker's task is to try and bolster those students having trouble. If she can't, the students are brought back to Lady Pitts for the second semester. Clapp believes students need a two-year support system that follows them after they deliver their babies.

Luncheon, Thursday, August 18

Keynote Speaker: **George F. Garcia, Superintendent of the School District of Kansas City, 1211 McGee St., Kansas City, MO 64106**
"Urban Youth: Your Future Depends on Them"

"The future of this country rests with how successful we are in educating urban youth and at-risk youth in urban centers," Garcia began.

Citing information from Arnold Packer's Workforce 2000, Garcia said that by 1992, one of three workers will be black or brown, and that figure will be even higher by the year 2010.

"For the first time, I believe, in the year 2010 we will all be interdependent," Garcia said. "The issues of blacks, browns, and whites, and others will be less important because if we don't succeed together, we will not succeed at all."

National statistics indicate that 700,000 students drop out each year in the United States. Nationally, this represents one of every four students; nearly one of every two students in urban areas. For our American Indians, Garcia said, the dropout rate is 60 percent; for Hispanics nationally the dropout rate is about 46 or 47 percent; and for blacks, it's around 34 to 35 percent. What can we do?

Garcia said first we must understand we have a problem that requires a continuing solution, not a one-year approach. Because this will be a problem well into the 21st century, we cannot afford to fail. He said we must recognize the problem locally and deal with it organizationally.

And before we can deal with the problem organizationally, we must identify who the at-risk students are. Students likely to drop out are those who don't perform well academically, those with a high rate of absenteeism, and those who have been retained. The economically poor also are among those most likely to drop out.

Garcia offered six strategies for addressing the problem of urban youth at risk: 1) intervene early and provide training for parents; 2) create a positive school climate; 3) set high expectations; 4) select the right teachers; 5) provide a broad range of instructional programs; and 6) create and nurture collaborative efforts among schools, businesses, city structures, and community organizations.

"Our success in the urban centers -- or our lack of success in the urban centers -- will have a major impact on everybody sitting in this room in the next century and on the success of this country," Garcia said.

Assisting the Development of Parent/Educator Partnership in the Education of Handicapped Children, Thursday, August 18

Speakers: **Sally S. Hoerr, President of the National Parent CHAIN and Past-President of the Illinois Alliance for Exceptional Children and Adults, 515 W. Giles Lane, Peoria, IL 61614**

Margaret M. Burley, Executive Vice-President of the National Parent CHAIN and Executive Director of the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Handicapped Children, 933 High St., Suite 106, Worthington, OH 43085

Sally Hoerr began the presentation with a brief description of the National Parent CHAIN (Coalitions for Handicapped Americans Information Network). The National Parent CHAIN serves children and adults with all types of handicaps. CHAIN's Direction Service is a one-stop source of information, referral, and personal assistance designed to help people with disabilities and their families gain access to the services and supports they need. Direction Service also is used by many professionals who work with disabled children and adults.

To reinforce the need for resource information on available services, Hoerr cited her own experience as a parent of a handicapped child. Parents, she said, have the time-consuming problem of identifying services for their children. Further, they often need assistance in dealing with their own feelings while learning how to care for their special needs child and obtain appropriate educational services.

In addition to Direction Service, CHAIN also provides parent/educator team training. Participants learn about special education; the laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to handicapped individuals; how to work together to establish an appropriate program for the child; how to manage conflict resolution and mediation between involved parties; and how to work with other agencies to help the child and the family.

Margaret Burley also described some of her experiences as a parent of a handicapped child and then discussed the changing demographics as they relate to handicapped children. More and more children have been determined to be at risk of academic failure. Advances in medicine have resulted in many more children surviving birth and infancy, and many of these children are entering or will soon enter the educational system with mild to severe disabilities. These children, according to Burley, are the most at risk of academic failure unless appropriate educational and related services are provided.

The parent/educator team training in Ohio has had ongoing support from the State Superintendent who has encouraged and supported training for all Ohio school districts. Focusing on teaching parents and educators communication and problem-solving skills, the parent/educator team training has resulted in a substantial decrease of due-process hearings. Since the training began, fewer than 90 due-process hearings have taken place in Ohio over the past 10 years. In contrast, some states have as many as 90 due-process hearings each month. According to Burley, parents and educators have learned how to work with each other as partners in the education of children, rather than as adversaries. This positive relationship between parents and adults also has had a positive impact on the way children feel about themselves and school.

CHAIN's Direction Service and Parent/Educator Team Training are provided in a number of states throughout the country. Burley and Hoerr distributed materials that described the services of the National Parent CHAIN, the Illinois Alliance for Exceptional Children and Adults, and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Handicapped Children.

Policy Forum, Thursday, August 18

Speakers: **Charles Bruner, State Senator, Iowa General Assembly, 922 Arizona, Ames, IA 50010**

Ronald Gerberry, Chair, House Education Committee, State House, Columbus, OH 43215

According to Senator Bruner, three significant pieces of legislation specifically addressing the needs of at-risk children and their families were passed during the 1988 legislative session of the Iowa General Assembly:

> Two were established in the context of the state's welfare reform efforts. Senate File 2192 created a Child Development Coordinating Council and funding for early childhood education services for at-risk three- and four-year-olds. Senate File 2225 created a Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Council and funding for family development programs targeted to AFDC families at risk of long-term welfare dependency.
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> The third piece of legislation, Senate File 2295, charged the Director of the Department of Education to develop criteria and procedures to assist in identifying at-risk students and developing suitable educational programming standards for them. Senate File 2295 also required that increasing emphasis be placed on developmentally appropriate education in the early elementary years, and charged the Board of Regents with developing a center for early developmental education to include programs designed to accommodate the needs of at-risk children.

Bruner provided materials that further explained the provisions of each piece of legislation.

Representative Gerberry addressed some operational problems regarding legislation for at-risk populations. First, he said there is no universal definition for the term "at risk." Second, legislation needs funding appropriations in order to be implemented. And third, the great diversity of welfare poopulations makes it difficult to predict whether a program that was successful in one state will work in another. Welfare roles are very different in urban and rural settings, he said. And within a state there is competition between the urban and rural groups for monies.

Gerberry believes the problem must be approached on a state-by-state basis because all states cannot address the problem in the same way. State legislatures need to see the big picture and know that monies spent now will save the state money in the long run. Legislators try to determine how the most children can be helped for the least money. The state legislatures and the chief state school officers strive to negotiate in the best interests of education and the state as a whole.

Audience participation focused on the importance of involving big business. Business has a strong interest in the success of the country's children and is willing to contribute money and manpower to help see that at-risk students are helped. The consensus was that everyone needs to become an education advocate.

Effective Teaching Strategies for Low-Achieving Students, Thursday, August 18

Speakers: **Beau Fly Jones, Program Director, and Lawrence Friedman, Director of Rural Education, NCREL, 295 Emroy, Elmhurst, IL 60126**

Beau Jones began her presentation with an example of a high school in the region that was in serious trouble. A new principal, who was well-read in the effective schools literature, came in and revamped the whole school. Students started coming to school, the building was no longer defaced, and teachers and students were talking to each other. All of these wonderful things were happening, but the students were still failing in their academics. The parents and other members of the community wanted to take over the school and fire the principal. What went wrong?

Jones conducted a short brainstorming session to get the audience to identify why the students continued to fail. Together they discussed the alignment of five variables that influence successful instruction: 1) characteristics of the learner; 2) characteristics of the materials, which typically are too difficult or too easy; 3) the characteristics of the instruction, which too often focuses on low-level skills and is not meaningful; 4) the question of tasks or tests, and in this case, the tests were too difficult for the students; and 5) grouping. The principal's main problem was that the school was only dealing with the negative characteristics of the learner, and that was not enough. The school needed to take a hard look at the alignment of the five variables and the quality of instruction.

In effective instruction, learning is goal-oriented and has two specific goals 1) constructing meaning to help students interact with materials and represent information, and 2) fostering independent learning during which students go beyond just practicing on their own. Learning involves linking new information to prior knowledge, Jones said, and because we all have a limited cognitive capacity, we need to build in hooks for long-term memory. Learning is a complex process that includes organizing information and acquiring cognitive and metacognitive structures. It is imperative, therefore, that materials are filled with both. Learning occurs in phases but is non-linear, and learning is influenced by development.

Larry Friedman presented examples of some of the strategies. He emphasized and demonstrated the value of organizing as both an instructional and learning strategy. This strategy applies to any kind of text material and is simple, organized, and goal-oriented. All of these characteristics make organizing a key to success, he said. He also said that representation is crucial to the learning process, and graphic representation is particularly helpful.

SPaRCS is an acronym for an indepth study procedure consisting of three phases, before reading, during reading, and after reading. In the first step, students Survey the text by reading the titles, subtitles and graphics. From this information students Predict what the passage will be about. These two steps enable students to see the general organization of the text and what information they should be able to get from reading the passage.

From here, students go on to Read and Construct meaning from the text. This phase is both a cognitive and metacognitive exercise in which students gain new knowledge about the content as well as assesses how they are thinking about the information.

Finally, students organize and Summarize the information. This is a natural process as a result of the prior stages. The organization takes the form of frames which are sets of questions that link information together. Between 85 and 90 percent of all text is organized into one of nine frames. With instruction and practice, students learn to identify the frames and become independent learners.

Managing a Variety of Resources for Children at Risk, Thursday, August 18

Speakers: **David Furrer, Pat Corry, Julie Murray, and Mike Rattle, Oconomowoc Area School District, Oconomowoc High School, 641 Forest St., Oconomowoc, WI 53066**

This session focused on a program developed at Oconomowoc Central High School. The program is a school within a school and is affectionately called "Paper High."

During its first year in 1974-75, the program served 14 students in grades 10-12. In the 1987-88 year, the program served 350 students in grades 9-12 and another 350 in grades 6-8. The speakers focused their presentation on the program for grades 9-12. The curriculum and instruction are experimental in nature and based on the following premises: 1) teachers must set a purpose for learning; 2) instruction and materials must be organized; 3) some students may need information presented twice; and 4) students need to be motivated. Other aids to learning include memory jogs, cuing the students what to do, and setting the stage for listening.

The faculty and staff at "Paper High" support and accept their students as they are. Because of this belief, they have structured a program that has rigid parameters but allows considerable freedom within the boundaries. Students in the program see the reality of school because the curriculum is made to fit the student. The program has a very broad appeal because it provides a common ground for the students, there is a humanness, and the educational standards are not lowered.

Entry to the program comes through referrals from counselors, teachers, parents, and students themselves. These students take a competency test, and the results provide the staff with a good indication of where the students need help. Some applicants come from the Kettle House which cares for students with drug/alcohol abuse problems.

Another source of applicants is the screening process for risk factors in students. These students can be classified into two tiers. In the first tier, students are one or two grade levels behind in their academics, or they are one credit or more behind the required number for their grade level. The second tier consists of students who are adjudicated delinquents, dropouts, pregnant, or non-attenders. Of the full-time students in the program, 90 percent are are "at risk".

Immediately following the referral or application the parents are contacted, and considerable effort is made to develop a trusting relationship with them. A holistic approach to the problem is considered vital to its solution.

Students in the program find some critical differences from their former schools. In an effort to reduce student stress, the classes are much smaller in size, and the schedule is modified. The faculty and staff have complete authority to act as their own administrators. Thus, it is in everyone's best interest for the students to succeed. In terms of the dropout rate, results have been positive; the dropout rate has decreased from 4 to 2.7 percent.

The speakers credited the program's success to the following characteristics: 1) it provides a safety net for students, and they know help is available; 2) flexibility of instruction meets the needs of the individual; 3) both the students and the faculty have a positive approach to learning; 4) the program brings a variety of different students together; and 5) there is a pooling of resources to benefit the program.

A contract between the student and the faculty/staff team working with him or her is a key element of the program. The terms of the contract vary with each student, but all contracts must have the signature of an advisor, the parent, the student, and the counselor. These contracts are often very creative, and thus the students truly become involved with their own educational plans.

Grades don't motivate at-risk students, the speakers said, but credits do. Because of this, students are given incremental credits for work. This might appear to cause attendance problems, but in fact students are eager to finish the task and get the credit. If the work is done to level of expectation, credit must be given.

Emergent Literacy: Reducing the Risk of Failure through Preschool-Kindergarten Writing and Reading, Thursday, August 18

Speaker: **Elizabeth Sulzby, School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109**

Elizabeth Sulzby's opening remarks included the definition of emergent literacy and its role in teaching children to read and write. "By emergent literacy," she said, "I mean what children do before they come to formal instruction about reading and writing." Emergent literacy concentrates on children's natural abilities to read and write. Sulzby said she does not think it is appropriate to offer instruction to kindergarten students based on an adult model of what reading and writing are all about, but she believes instruction can be offered based on a child's model that is developmentally oriented.

Sulzby said that emergent literacy activities consist of scribbling and storybook reading, which are legitimate parts of reading and writing development. Emergent literacy is conceptual in nature, meaning that it deals with the whole process of understanding print. And lastly, reading and writing behaviors are developmental, but unlike hard stage theories, the stages are soft. That is, it is not strictly necessary for a child to pass through one stage to enter the next. A child may be reading or writing in more than one stage at a time.

Sulzby identified one of the critical problems in reading instruction as using instruction and materials that are inappropriate for the child's level. Children reading from print use all the cue systems available for print, and a teacher working with prereaders must be aware of the student's use of the cues to be sure the instruction and materials are on level.

To ready from print, a child needs minimum kinds of knowledge, part of which is some notion of comprehension, some knowledge of letter-sound relationship, and some notion of the word as a stable unit. Just having these three parts of knowledge, though, is not enough, Sulzby said. The three parts must be coordinated together, and one must be able to move back and forth across them.

Instruction is the key to working with at-risk students. Research shows that if a child is read to repeatedly from the same book, the child will "read" the book. Children who have been read to will exhibit reading behaviors, Sulzby said. Children who have not been read to with the same intensity may be able to "fill in the blanks" when asked to read the story.

Children's emergent reading strategies are imbalanced prior to conventional reading, said Sulzby. When the child has developed all of the strategies, the child is reading.

Sulzby then discussed how children write and reread their writing. She stated that writing begins with a child's first scribbles on a paper. The focus at this time should be figuring out the child's intent rather than trying to decode the symbols. Teachers should try to discover the child's underlying concept and begin instruction from that point.

Children's writing performances differ as the tasks differ. Children will go back to an earlier level when they are faced with a difficult task.

Ohio Rural Study Skills Program, Friday, August 19

Speaker: **Margaret Trent, Ohio Department of Education, 65 S. Front St., Rm. 802, Columbus, OH 43266-0308**

The goals of the Ohio Rural Study Skills Program are to 1) introduce a study skills resource book, 2) assist in forming staff development teams, 3) develop staff development materials on study skills and 4) provide incentives for districts to develop these materials.

Two requests for proposals were used in this project to meet the third and fourth goals. Districts and schools could submit proposals to develop 30-minute videos or written materials for study skills staff development. Eleven proposals were accepted.

The study skills resource book focuses on seven major study skills for a K-12 continuum. Trent said study skills are not something kids just have; they must learn from teachers how to develop them.

For example, organizing information is covered in one section of the book. This activity teaches students to sort and categorize information. One of the beginning steps involves "finding what you know and putting it into categories," Trent said. From there the program elicits the categories from the students.

From this example Trent emphasized that study skills and thinking skills are closely linked. Just as we scaffold thinking skills instruction so must we scaffold study skills instruction. Students must gradually assume responsibility for identifying appropriate study skills to use during different segments of their learning.

Similar examples showing the natural scaffolding of instruction through the grade levels were discussed. Included in this demonstration was report writing. Trent encouraged teachers to begin with having young children write reports as a class. Eventually report writing becomes an independent task, but without adequate training, students will continue to rewrite encyclopedia articles.

In summary, Trent stated that study skills are not just for slow learners. They are definite competencies that must be attained by all students.

Indiana's Educational Opportunity for At-Risk Students Legislation, Friday, August 19

Speakers: **Dennis N. Jackson, Manager of the Indiana Students At Risk Program, Indiana Department of Education, and Betty R. Johnson, Chief, Office of School Assistance, Indiana Department of Education, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798**

In 1987, the Indiana General Assembly passed the Educational Opportunity Program for At-Risk Students and authorized $20 million to be made available to school corporations (school districts) for the 1988-89 school year. According to the legislation, the Indiana Department of Education was required to develop a formula for allocating funds among school corporations based on the percentage of families with children below the poverty level, the percentage of children in single-parent households, and the percentage of the population in the school corporation 19 years old and over that had not graduated from high school. In order to receive funds under the program, school corporations had to apply for grants to fund eligible programs from their pre-determined allocation.

Dennis Jackson reported that the legislation identified nine types of programs that were eligible for funding: 1) preschool programs; 2) full-day kindergarten; 3) parental and community involvement programs; 4) transitional programs; 5) tutoring programs; 6) remediation programs; 7) expanded utilization of school counselors; 8) individualized programs (33 were funded); and 9) model alternative educational programs for students who are determined by the Department to be at risk of withdrawing from school before graduation.

Of the proposals funded by the Department of Education, 2 each received more than $1 million; 3 received between $500,000 and $1 million; 33 received between $100,000 and $500,000; 47 received between $50,000 and $100,000; 195 received between $10,000 and $50,000; 12 received between $5,000 and $10,000; and 10 received less than $5,000.

All of the money received by school corporations was intended for programmatic costs and could not be used for administrative or staff development expenses. Further, all programs had to be new programs, starting after July 1, 1988, or be expansions of programs (the addition of students or components) developed before July 1, 1988.

Betty Johnson reported that each school corporation was required to define its own at-risk population to be served. Factors that were considered by many of the school corporations as placing a child at risk of not acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to become a productive adult included inadequate preparation for kindergarten, single-parent or multi-family household, frequent moving, single teenage parent, temporary stress, language differences, and health problems.

Jackson and Johnson distributed packets of materials which included a copy of the legislation, cost estimates for each of the nine types of programs, guidelines for developing an educational program for at-risk students, and a directory of personnel from the Department of Education who would serve as contacts for information regarding each of the programs.

Pregnant and Parenting Teens, Friday, August 19

Speakers: **Asenath Andrews, Booth Continuing Education for Girls, Detroit Public Schools, 130 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48216**

Peggy Clapp, Lady Pitts School, Lincoln Downtown Educational Center, 820 E. Knapp St., Milwaukee, WI 53202-2799

Asenath Andrews opened the session with an overview of predictors for teen pregnancy. One is the number of brothers a girl has. Andrews said this is because boys can come to the girl's house under the guise of seeing the brother, but they're really seeing her. Another is poor school attendance. Andrews thinks many of the pregnant teens in Detroit have averaged only half-day attendance. "Most kids get pregnant at their homes, not in cars or parks," she said. The girl's mother's age at first pregnancy also is a factor; history repeats. Attitudes and behaviors similar to those of dropouts is another indicator. Older siblings who drop out is another factor, because younger siblings tend to follow that pattern at the same age or even younger. Andrews said 70 percent of female dropouts leave school because of pregnancy.

The age at which a woman has her first child has more effect on her future than any other demographic variable, Andrews said. These young women tend to drop out of school and continue to have babies, and those who do return to high school are 29 years old before they finish -- 10 years behind their contemporaries.

The need for a program for pregnant teens in Detroit was based on the statistic that each year 3,000 school-age women in Wayne County become pregnant, said Andrews. Nationally, 300,000 teens each year have their third child.

The Detroit Continuing Education Program for Girls (CEG), of which the Booth School is a part, is able to serve 600 to 700 young women. Another 600 to 700 participate in regular school programs. In a county with 3,000 pregnant teens, this means half are not being served in a program.

The CEG program is a regular academic program but the instruction is different. The students are told what is expected from them both educationally and behaviorally, and everybody is trained in the cooperative learning mode. The program makes use of many social service programs.

Peggy Clapp described some of the practices at the Lady Pitts School in Milwaukee. The importance of good nutrition is stressed, and in fact, Lady Pitts forbids "junk food" in the school. Andrews said that although their policy on such food is not as stringent as it is at Lady Pitts, she makes a point of letting students know the correlation between poor nutrition and low birth weight on their babies' intellectual development. She also said she is more concerned with salt consumption for her students because of the high incidence of toxemia.

Both Clapp and Andrews said their schools do not encourage participation of the fathers in the programs. Experience has shown that the negative aspects far outweigh any benefits.

Sex education is an area both Clapp and Andrews would like to see treated as a K-12 program focusing on male/female relationships and human sexuality. "Too often, such education focuses only on the plumbing and the 'how-to' aspects," said Clapp. And on the topic of birth control, Andrews pointed out that society still has not conditioned its women to take responsibility for their sexuality. A young women who takes birth control pills is seen as loose, and many teens still believe sexual activity should be sponstaneous and not planned for with precautions.

Ohio's Reading Recovery Program: An Update, Friday, August 19

Speaker: **Carol Lyons, Ohio State University, 29 W. Woodruff, Columbus, OH 43017**

"Every time a child fails, the whole community fails," Carol Lyons began. It costs $3,000 a year to educate a child, so if that child is failing we are essentially throwing money away.

To help deal with one of the major causes of school failure, inability to read, researchers at Ohio State established the Reading Recovery Program. Students who participated in the one-on-one instruction were performing at grade level in 15 weeks of 30-minute sessions.

The sessions focus on four main activities. First, students and teachers read 2-3 familiar books from a library of approximately 300 that have been carefully selected by the program facilitators. Second, in the Running Record Analysis, the teacher observes the strengths of the child and then uses those strengths to develop the child's reading strategies. The goal is for that child to become an independent reader. This activity determines which of the three reading cues (meaning, structure, or visual) the child is using. (Good readers use all three.) The teacher watches for patterns and then structures text-related questions accordingly while trying to help the child use the cues he or she is not using. The scaffolding nature of the program enables the child to learn what he or she is supposed to do.

In the Write, Compose, Construct, Reread activity, writing is one of the most powerful tools. Children hear the sounds and words they have generated, and each child makes his or her own book. Finally, students read new materials. The teacher carefully chooses books to meet the child's needs and level and again carefully structures comprehension questions to focus on the cues the child needs to develop.

In the Reading Recovery Program, teachers take "field notes" and use them instead of a formal lesson plan. These notes are records of the child's behavior that help the teacher recognize the child's strengths and plan the lesson for the next day.

The researchers have found that the program is making a difference for two reasons. First, students are succeeding. Second, teachers are working with children, not just teaching reading. So far, the program has enrolled 5,699 children, of whom 4,004 have reached the average reading level for their classroom and have been discontinued from the program. Lyons reported that in its third year, the program discontinued 85 percent of its students. The average reading levels ranged from 1.2 to 3.1.

The 531 teachers who have participated so far spend a half-day with an average of 8 to 10 different children a year in the Reading Recovery Program. In the second half of their day these teachers teach Chapter classes or regular first grade. This arrangement results in regular program students benefitting from the teaching strategies, and teachers working more effectively in the classroom, said Lyons.

To participate in the project, students must be in the bottom 20 percent of the class. The researchers used the following criteria to identify the students: 1) letter identification; 2) site words; 3) print concepts (students are given a pre and post test on their knowledge of book structures); 4) writing vocabulary (the number of words they could write in 10 minutes excluding inventive spelling) and dictation (the number a sounds they can hear); and 5) a Running Record based on the reading of Where's Spot which enables the teacher to identify where to begin instruction.

Following the screening, the teacher fills out a diagnostic survey noting the child's strengths rather than weaknesses. From this survey the teacher can infer what strategies the child is using.

The program has had a significant effect on the adult community because parents, principals, and administrators are able to see positive results. They are impressed with the teachers' ability to identify the child's strengths, and teachers experience a change in their expectations of the students. Further, inservices are coming from within the building, creating a team spirit.

Lyons said between 15-20 letters come in each day asking how to get students involved. Teachers want to get involved because they see the difference that can be made. But the program cannot be packaged. Teachers must receive training at Ohio State for one year and participate in a very structured program.

Luncheon, Friday, August 19

Keynote Speaker: **Samuel Proctor, Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University, Room 218 Beck Hall, Kilmer Campus, New Brunswick, NJ 08903**
"Professionalism: Serving Those Who Need Us Most"

Samuel Proctor said what he knows about education and the social and philosophical foundations of education came from the home in Virginia where he was born and reared during the Great Depression. In a rigidly segregated public education system, and amidst great poverty, his mother, father, four brothers and a sister, managed to survive and succeed.

Proctor described his family: his baby brother is an eye surgeon; the next brother is now deceased, but he had been a government clerk; the next brother is a dentist; the next one was an Air Force bandmaster; and his sister taught school for 40 years and retired. By what strategy and methods did they surmount those obstacles?

He recalled six pair of elbows around the dining room table where all the children did their homework while their father practiced the violin in the corner and his mother darned socks and sewed. "From behind that thick wall of segregation and all of that poverty in the Depression in that dusty hollow called Huntersville -- from that dining room table and those six pair of elbows, that's what emerged."

We must cultivate the professional skill to provide for the young people whatever it was that was there but is missing right now, Proctor said. Those in the field of education must have professionalism, he said, for it is more than just a job. Educators must have passion, a great concern and regard for children, and they must want to see human lives come to flower.

Educators must want to see children live beyond instinctive behavior, and glandular behavior, and neurological necessity. Children must learn to elevate themselves beyond survival behavior and behave like persons with freedoms, aware of options and choices.

Proctor said, "A professional will say, 'Show me the best batter you've got and watch me pitch to him; show me the biggest linebacker you've got and watch me run over him; show me the fastest long ball receiver you've got and watch me knock him out of the sky.'"

But look how differently we behave in public education, Proctor continued. As soon as they land, we test the kids. We find the strongest and fittest so we can make them stronger and more fit. We wind up blaming the kids for everything that has happened in their lifetimes. There's no nobility in that, Proctor said, no intellectualism.

"Professionals want to take the worst possible situations and then show what can be done with their skill and commitment," Proctor said. "It doesn't take much imagination to transfer that to education."

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